



*Montgomery County Child Care  
Resource and Referral Center:*

*Serving the community on behalf of  
children and families*



**December 2008**

The Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center (MCCCR&RC) is a program of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services with funding provided by the Maryland State Department of Education. The program operates in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Maryland Child Care Resource Network administered by the Maryland Committee for Children. The MCCCR&RC Advisory Board includes community representatives and child care providers and assists program staff in developing services that meet the needs of the community.



# Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center: Serving the community on behalf of children and families

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## Introduction

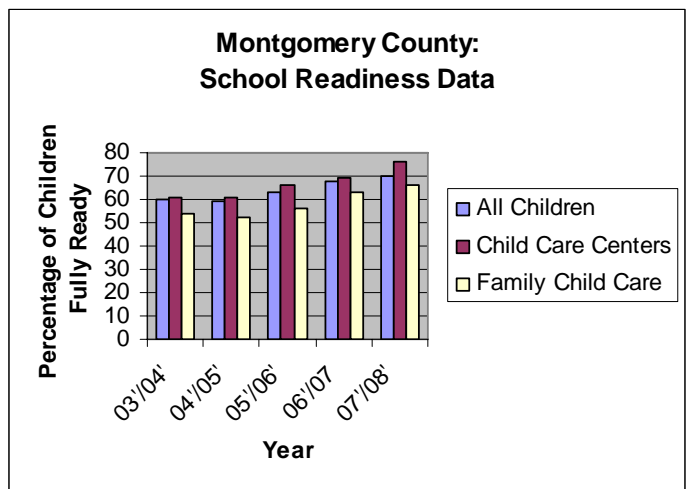
We know that some of the benefits for children enrolled in quality child care include early learning, school success and later achievements in life. Society also benefits because children who have quality early childhood education have less need for higher cost services such as remedial education and juvenile services. Based on this knowledge about early childhood development, the state and county have developed comprehensive plans to support quality child care and early childhood services.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Maryland State Department of Education an increasing percentage of children are entering school fully prepared for kindergarten. In Montgomery County 76% of those children who attended centers and 66% who attended family child care prior to entering kindergarten were assessed fully ready for school in the 2007-2008 school year.<sup>2</sup>

This report explains how the Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Center has contributed to the improvements in school readiness by:

- Connecting families to licensed child care programs and support services
- Helping child care providers achieve higher credentials and quality standards
- Expanding early learning opportunities for high risk children

The report also explains the challenges we must overcome to ensure that ALL children have equal opportunities to enroll in high quality programs that help prepare them for school and life. We look forward to working closely with the community toward this goal and welcome your questions, suggestions and ideas for collaboration.



<sup>1</sup> *Montgomery County Early Care and Education Congress Action Agenda*, 2008.

*Strategic Plan of the Division of Early Childhood Development*, Maryland State Department of Education, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> *Children Entering School Ready to Learn*, *Montgomery School Readiness Information*, Maryland State Department of Education, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008,

## Connecting families to licensed child care programs and support services

The LOCATE: Child Care service provides families with referrals to regulated family child care programs, centers, nursery schools, camps and Head Start/Pre-K programs. The referrals are provided online at [www.mdchildcare.org](http://www.mdchildcare.org) and over the phone at **240-777-3130**. Families who call the service learn from experienced professionals about the basic health and safety standards programs must meet to be licensed. They also receive tips for choosing quality child care and are referred to other supportive services as needed. Families may also ask LOCATE staff any questions they have about caregiver training, state regulations, children's developmental needs and other related issues.

Last year<sup>3</sup>:

- An estimated 10,000 families used the online LOCATE database to search for child care in Montgomery County.
- 2,000 families were served by the LOCATE telephone service and of these, 52% were referred to child care subsidies due to their low income.
- 50% of families contacted found care within 2 months and of those who found care, 87% highly rated the program they chose for their child.
- 96% of customers surveyed were highly satisfied with LOCATE services and the program received a quality assurance award for meeting national customer service standards.



*“When I called LOCATE: Child Care, I had no idea what my options were or how to go about finding child care. With their help I found a licensed program near my home where I am confident my baby will be safe and happy.”*

*Working parent*

## Helping child care providers achieve higher credentials and quality standards

The MCCR&RC training and technical assistance staff offer workshops, series classes and other learning opportunities approved by the Maryland State Department of Education to help providers meet state child care licensing and credentialing requirements. The staff helps providers who call the Technical Assistance line or visit the Resource Library to find the information they need to further their understanding and apply best practices in their programs. They also administer scholarships and quality enhancement awards for those who are pursuing a Child Development Associate Credential, a degree in early childhood or accreditation from the state or a national organization. The Nurse Child Care Health Consultant visits programs onsite to show providers how to keep their programs safe and healthy. Call **240-777-3110** for more information.

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<sup>3</sup> Data source: Montgomery County LOCATE: Child Care database, July 2008.



*“Without this project, I would never have known or wanted to achieve my accreditation. I would never have considered accreditation without having all the fees, including for training, paid for.”*

*Accredited Family Provider and Project Participant*

Last year<sup>4</sup>:

- Over 1,000 child care providers participated in one or more of the over 100 classes offered and 89% received *Core of Knowledge* credit for the MD Child Care Credential.
- 466 providers were credentialed by the Maryland State Department of Education.
- 112 scholarships were awarded to 70 providers to pursue a degree in Early Childhood Education.
- 9 Family Child Care Providers received ongoing training, onsite peer consultation, funding for the purchase of materials and equipment and incentives to become nationally accredited.
- Providers received 124 onsite visits from the Nurse Health Consultant

## Expanding early learning opportunities for high risk children

MCCCR&RC staff helps providers teach children who are least likely to be fully prepared for school by working intensely with those who enroll high-risk children.



The Pre-K Curriculum Training Project targets child care providers serving low-income and immigrant communities and offers participants ongoing foundational and curriculum training, onsite mentor support and English as a Second Language classes.



Last year<sup>5</sup>:

- 54 child care staff participated in free training aligned with the MCPS Pre-K Curriculum.
- 36 providers participated in English as a Second Language classes.
- 18 programs began implementing the MCPS Pre-K Curriculum with mentor support.

<sup>4</sup> Data sources: Peopleware database 2008, MSDE Division of Early Childhood Development, Office of Credentialing, 2008.

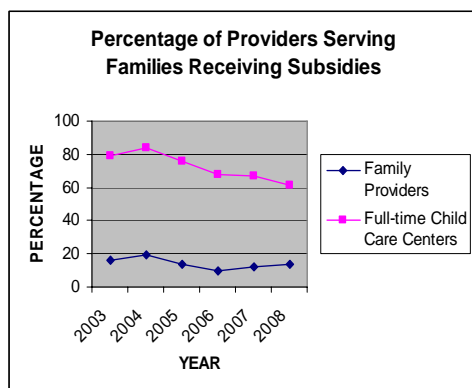
<sup>5</sup> Data source: MCCCR&RC Peopleware database, 2008.



The PILOT (Providing Inclusive Learning Opportunities for Three-year olds) project targets providers serving children with special needs and includes training and onsite support from MCPS preschool special education teachers. Last year, 30 child care providers participated in the PILOT project.

## Progress is evident, but ensuring quality care for all children is challenging

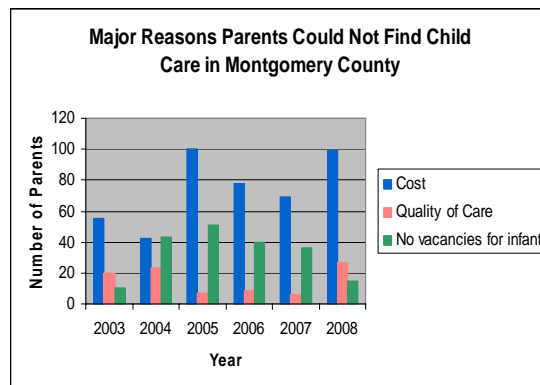
While we are making progress in improving child care programs and children's school readiness, families seeking quality child care face a number of significant challenges in Montgomery County.



Parents most often report to LOCATE: Child Care that cost is their top reason for not finding care. In fact, child care is the second highest household expense in Montgomery County. In addition, child care subsidies for low-income families do not cover enough of the real cost of child care to make it affordable for eligible families. Most child care providers are not in a position to significantly reduce their fees to assist families. In fact, the number of programs who are accepting subsidies has been steadily decreasing since the state increased the parent co-payment requirement in 2004.<sup>6</sup>

Quality is also a top concern. In Montgomery County only 12% of staff is credentialed. In addition, only 11% of centers are accredited at the state or national level and 1% of family child care programs are nationally accredited.<sup>7</sup>

Due to the economic downturn, high quality licensed options for families are reduced as programs close and staff leave the field. Fewer programs are licensed to care for infants or have experience in caring for children with special needs, so a loss of providers puts these children more at risk.



During this challenging time, the MCCCCR&RC staff and Advisory Board continue to be committed to work with the community on behalf of children and families.

<sup>6</sup> Data source: Montgomery County LOCATE: Child Care database, July 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008. *Child Care Demographics 2008, Montgomery County Report*; Maryland Committee for Children, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Data sources: Montgomery County LOCATE: Child Care database 9/08; MSDE website 9/08; NAEYC website 9/08; *Child Care Demographics 2008, Montgomery County Report*; Maryland Committee for Children, 2008.

## Montgomery County Child Care Resource and Referral Contacts

Program Contacts and Staffing	Advisory Board
<p><b>Main Office (240-777-3278 or 240-777-3110)</b>  <a href="mailto:earlychildhoodservices@montgomerycountymd.gov">earlychildhoodservices@montgomerycountymd.gov</a></p> <p>Barbara Warman, Executive Director</p> <p>Maria Rosario, Program Manager</p> <p>Nancy Fuller, Principal Administrative Aide</p> <p><b>LOCATE: Child Care (240-777-3130)</b>  Elena Aguilar, Child Care Specialist</p> <p>Amy Cover, Child Care Specialist</p> <p>C. K. Tenenbaum, Child Care Specialist</p> <p><b>Training Department (240-777-3203)</b>  Jennifer Arnaiz, Training Director</p> <p>Sapi Giordano, Special Projects Coordinator</p> <p>Victoria Negro, Training Assistant</p> <p><b>Health Consultation (240-777-3128)</b>  Nancy Curtis, R.N., Child Care Health Consultant</p> <p><b>Technical Assistance (240-777-1457 or 240-777-3249)</b>  Jody Burghardt, Professional Development Coordinator</p>	<p><b>Officers</b>  Rose S. Beckner, Chair</p> <p>Ellen Neches, Secretary</p> <p>Kathi Carey-Fletcher, Resource Network Liasion</p> <p>Fran Simon, Events Coordinator</p> <p><b>Members</b>  Mary N. Block</p> <p>Demetrias Brown</p> <p>Norma Hood</p> <p>Elizabeth Ijah</p> <p>Ruth Musicante</p> <p>Audrey Pabs-Garmon</p> <p>Sherry Ruiz</p> <p>Sandra Galliani-Smith</p> <p>Joe Anne Stenstrom</p> <p>Isabelle Tchatchoua</p>

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/earlychildhoodservices](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/earlychildhoodservices)



*“Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.” John Wooden*

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